

DAN AND THE FROG

Published by Carmen Saptouw at Smashwords

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The Ponds were nestled in the Green Valley. It was inhabited by a little kingdom of frogs. Their King was a good and kind leader, but the concern for his people grew daily. Their food and other resources decreased by the growing pollution that was spreading through The Ponds. He had sent out his best men to find a new home for his people, but they had returned without finding a new haven for the kingdom. A glimmer of hope came into sight as he watched the last frog return from his journey. He immediately met with the King and claimed that he found a new home for the frog kingdom. A meeting was called in the centre of The Ponds.

"I am now the Rich Frog, as my new home is filled with food and clean water," said the Rich Frog. "You do not have to live like this: our homes are polluted and there is no food left, follow me and you will live a care free life with added protection," he continued while pointing to a black bird in the sky. "That is my new friend and he will make sure that no harm will come to us."

There was nothing the King could do as he watched his fellow frogs leave him one by one. "I am sorry your majesty, but he has promised us a life beyond this pond: a life of a full tummy and a clean body," said one of the frogs as he passed the King. "There is no need for apologies," said the Rich Frog before the King could answer. "You can't provide for your people and therefore you must be de-crowned!" He took the crown from the King and placed it on his own head. "Now my people, follow me, let us not waste any more time at this dump our new home awaits!" exclaimed the Rich Frog.

In the village close to The Ponds lived a boy named Dan. He was playing with the rest of the boys from the village, but was struggling to hit his target with his slingshot. "No not again!" he said as the stone missed the plastic bottle once again. The other boys were laughing at him. "You should throw that slingshot away Dan, you will never hit the target," said one of the boys. They are probably right he thought as he walked away from the laughing crowd. "Dan! Wait!" he heard one of the older boys call to him. "Yes, Kyle?" said Dan. "Listen here, you have to ignore them. You just started to use the slingshot; you just have to keep on practising. In time you will hit your target," said Kyle. "Thanks, but I think the others are right, I just can't do it," he said as he stalked off.

Dan decided to go for a walk to get out of the village for a while. It was a hot day and he needed to cool down. I'll go to The Ponds it is the perfect place to cool down and get rid of this thing, he thought as he placed the slingshot in his pocket.

Dan walked over the hill and admired the lush green trees and plants that covered it like a blanket. He instantly felt relaxed, but when he reached The Ponds he was completely in shock. There was litter everywhere and the once clear pools were now a dark brown colour. What could've happened to The Ponds? Who would do this, he thought? "It must have been the animals that live here, now that makes sense," he said out loud. "I beg to differ," he heard. He looked around, confused. There was no one at The Ponds but him. "I am down here human," he heard. Dan looked down and in the water he saw what looked like a green face with big white eyes. Dan was puzzled. "Let me help you there," said the green thing as he emerged out of the murky water. Then Dan heard a croak sound. "A frog, a talking frog!" he said. "Yes, that is correct; I am only a frog now. I used to be more than that, but that was the good old days," said the frog as he hopped on to a rock. "What do you mean?" asked Dan. "I used to be the King of the frogs, but my people have abandoned me for a life of food and clean water, but I don't blame them," answered the frog as he explained to Dan what happened. "Now I am all alone in this

polluted pool, but enough about me. What is your name boy?" continued the King frog. I am Dan and I have noticed that The Ponds have indeed changed a bit," said Dan. "Now that is an understatement. It is a complete mess and your kind is responsible!" said the King, irritated.

"What do you mean 'my kind'?" asked Dan. "The humans', boy, they are responsible. They come to The Ponds, but when they leave, their dirt and litter stays behind. We can't clean The Ponds by ourselves and now it is almost uninhabitable," said the King frog.

"Ribbit, Ribbit!" they heard. "Oh hello James, you have returned," said the King to the approaching frog. James stopped suddenly when he saw the human. "Don't worry, come closer, he is a friend and we can trust him," said the King frog. "James, this young boy's name is Dan and Dan this is James. He was my right hand frog once," said the King frog. "I still am, your majesty," he said, staring at Dan suspiciously. "I only left to spy on the Rich frog and to see where he took our fellow frogs," James continued. "What did you find?" asked Dan. "The Rich frog was dishonest, your majesty," said James, ignoring Dan. "He took the frogs to become his slaves. They are building his kingdom for him; there is very little food and water. For now they will survive, but I fear not for long. "We have to save them," said the King frog. "Wait a second, frog. Why would you want to help them?" Dan asked. "They left you for what they thought would be a better life. I say let them be slaves because they chose to go with the Rich frog," Dan continued. "Actually, it's not 'frog'! It's 'your majesty'," said James sternly. "I apologise, 'your majesty', but why would you want to save them?" asked Dan. "They are good frogs; they had no other choice but to go with the Rich frog. It's not their fault that they were deceived, but they need our help and we help where we can, Dan. There are times when we have to look to the greater good for all," answered the King frog. "I understand," said Dan. "It was nice meeting you, Dan, but James and I have to hop along now, we have a long journey ahead of us," said the King frog. "Ribbit," confirmed James.

Dan stood frozen for a moment, pondering as he watched them leave and then he shouted, "Wait, I'm coming with you!" "Thank you, but this is not your battle boy," said the King frog. "I can be of help, your majesty, I can carry you to make your journey quicker," said Dan. "He has a point, your majesty, we can reach the other frogs sooner with the boy's help," said James. "Splendid, then I thank you for your generous offer, Dan," said the King frog. Dan bent down and reached out both hands, one for each frog to climb on to, and he started to walk in the direction that James pointed out.

After some time they reached an area filled with rocks. "We are close now," said James. "But there are only rocks here," said Dan. "They are behind those rocks," said James, pointing with his little green, webbed finger. "Dan, you can put us down now," said the King frog. "We will be going alone from here, Dan. Please stay hidden behind the rocks. We will call you if needed," said the King. Then the two frogs hopped out of Dan's sight.

Behind the rocks the frogs were working hard, building the Rich frog's new home. "Faster! We don't have all day! The straw must be gathered before sun set!" the Rich frog instructed. He was sitting on his so-called throne in the shade shouting orders. "The frogs all look very tired. Why don't you let them rest while we talk?" said the King to the Rich frog as he approached him. "They are my frogs now and I say when it is time to rest. What are you doing here anyway, have you decided to join my cause?" asked the Rich frog. "Actually I came to fetch my fellow frogs; they are coming home with me!" instructed the King. The frogs started to cheer.

“Order, Order!” bellowed the Rich frog. “There is no need for that behaviour, you are not going anywhere! Have you forgotten what has happened to The Ponds?” he continued. The smiles disappeared from the frogs’ faces as they remembered. “Yes, that is true; The Ponds are not what it used to be. At least, though, with me they will have their freedom. So Rich frog, let my people go!” said the King frog. “No, they are mine now! They will not leave!” said the Rich frog. “I will not ask again, Rich frog, let my people go!” said the King frog as he grew angrier. “I said no! I will have to make you understand that you have no say here,” said the Rich frog.

He whistled at the black bird circling above them. The bird made eye contact with the Rich frog. “Eat him, my pet,” the Rich frog commanded. The bird stopped circling, looked straight at the King frog and swooped down towards him. “Look out, your majesty!” James shouted as he tried to reach the King, but he was too late. The bird had gotten to the King first and with a flap of his wings he lifted the King higher and higher up into the sky.

“Now do you see what will happen if you do not obey me? Now back to work! You too James; this is no place for heroes.” said the Rich frog.

Suddenly a dark shadow appeared. It nearly covered the entire area where the frogs were gathered. “It’s a human!” the frogs shouted. “A what?” said the Rich frog in complete shock. “But that is impossible, they do not come to the rocks,” he continued. Dan stood above the frogs like a giant taking the slingshot out of his pocket. “Run for your lives, he is not a friendly human; he has a weapon!” the frogs screamed in fear. It was chaos the frogs were hopping in every direction. “Wait everyone, he will not hurt us, he is here to help!” James shouted trying to calm the masses. Dan picked up a stone, placed it into his slingshot, pulled the sling back and aimed it at the bird. The rock flew through the air, but missed the bird. Immediately he picked up another stone. It shot through the air, but again it missed the bird. He was about to give up when he remembered Kyle’s words to him: “Keep on practising and in time you will hit your target. “He picked up another rock and aimed it at the circling bird once more.

This time the rock hit the black bird on the stomach. “Yes, I got him,” said Dan excitedly, but his victory didn’t last long. The bird let out a cry of pain and dropped the King frog. Oh no, thought Dan as he watched the bird fly off and the King frog fall at a rapid speed towards the ground. The frogs were all frozen as they watch the King fall. Dan moved as quickly as he could, cupping his hands to catch the King frog. A sigh of relief came from the gathered frogs as the King landed safely in Dan’s hands. “Why thank you Dan, you saved my life,” said the King frog. “It’s a pleasure your majesty,” said Dan as he placed the King safely on the ground. The King hopped to the Rich frog and said, “Now as I was saying earlier, I want you to release my people.” “The answer is still no,” said the Rich frog stubbornly. Dan couldn’t take it anymore. He walked to the Rich frog and lifted his leg and said, “If you do not set them free I will step on you.” “No you will not!” said the Rich frog. “Your majesty, may I go ahead and end his life?” Dan asked the King frog. “Yes you may, Dan,” said the King frog winking at him. Then Dan slowly moved his lifted foot down towards the Rich frog.

“Okay, okay, spare my life and take your people,” said the Rich frog. “Now leave and take your human with you,” he continued. There is only one more thing. You do not deserve to wear that,” said James as he took the crown from the Rich frog’s head and handed it back to the King. “Ah, yes, that feels good” said the King frog as he placed the crown back on his head. His frogs surrounded him apologising for leaving him and thanking him for not forgetting about them. “There is no need for apologies now. Shall we hop along home?” asked the King frog. “Your

majesty, what do we do with the Rich frog?" Dan asked. "Nothing Dan, he has lost today's battle. That should be punishment enough," answered the King frog. "If you say so, your majesty," said Dan, but he turned to the Rich frog and said, "If you ever try to come near their kingdom or try to hurt them, my foot and I will find you that's a promise! Do you understand frog?" "Yes I do," said the defeated Rich frog as he watched them leave.

"Well that went well," said Dan as they reached The Ponds. "Indeed it did, but we can't stay here Dan, there is nothing here for us so we will have to find another home," said the King frog. "Don't be too hasty about leaving your majesty. I have a plan," said Dan. He greeted the King and the other frogs, and started his journey home over the hill.

Days passed at The Ponds and there was no sign of Dan. "I am afraid he is not coming back, your majesty," said James. "I think you might be right, James. We will have to start our preparations. We will leave The Ponds in a day or two. Please send the message to our fellow frogs," said the King.

"Croak, croak, croak," they heard from the lookout rock. "That was three croaks; that must mean humans are coming," said James. "It's probably another picnic. Come on James, we have a lot to get in order," said the King. "Your majesty, your majesty!" one of the frogs shouted as he came hopping towards the King. "What has gotten you so rattled?" the King asked the approaching frog. "It's Dan, he has returned with more humans," answered the frog. "Now this I have to see! Come on, James," said the King.

"Well hello Dan, you have returned," said the King. "Yes, your majesty, these are my friends. They also live in the village nearby and when I told them what happened to The Ponds they instantly said that they would help," said Dan. "It is time to take responsibility for what we have done. We apologise; we didn't know that this would happen to The Ponds. We are here to clean The Ponds," said Kyle as the rest of the group all nodded their heads in agreement and started to get to work.

It took a while for The Ponds to regain its former glory, but in the end it did, thought Dan while he was enjoying the clear Ponds. "The water is clear; the frogs are resting on the re-grown flower stools. I don't know how to thank you, Dan," said the King frog. "There is no need, your majesty; this was done for the greater good for all."

The End

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Thanks!

Carmen Saptouw

About Carmen Saptouw

As a young child of only 8 years old, she was inspired to write children's stories. Following her childhood years, she got so involved with being a teenager that she completely forgot about her passion for writing. Only in 2011, the year she turned 29, was her passion reawakened from its deep slumber when her dad found the stories she had written as a child. So more than 20 years later she rewrote the stories with the aim to preserve it, but as she typed, the stories evolved and new ideas were sparked. She aspires to share her stories with children around the world, and for each story to have a sound moral lesson. Visit [Tales by Carmen Saptouw](#), sign up and follow her blog as she explores how parent and child can apply the life lessons contained in her stories.